Service-Learning: Making the Connection

Linking Service-Learning with Educational Programs and School Reform Initiatives

Service-Learning and Accelerated Schools
As a nation-wide reform initiative, Accelerate Schools is based on three principles: Unity of Purpose, Building on Strengths, and Empowerment with Responsibility. In addition each classroom uses the concept of Powerful Learning to increase academic achievement.

The SL Connection:
Service-Learning can be a venue for powerful learning; empowers students to make a difference in their community; builds on the strengths of the community; unifies the goals of school and community.

Service-Learning and Re:Learning (Coalition of Essential Schools)
As a nation-wide reform initiative, CES is based upon ten common principles:

- Students should learn to use their minds well
- School's goals should apply to all students
- Student as worker; teacher as coach
- Tone of decency
- Student-centered administrative choices
- Less is more
- Personalization
- Exhibition of mastery
- Teacher as generalist
- Democracy and equity.

The SL Connection:
Students do real life problem solving, all students have the ability to participate, gives students a personal connection, allows students to take responsibility for their learning, allows students to show their knowledge in real-life situations, assists in building character skills, allows students to participate in decision making by service on local and state advisory councils, allows students to experience individuals in need, thus creating a sense of equity for all people.

Service-Learning and Turning Points
As a nation-wide middle school reform initiative, Turning Points gives recommendations for transforming middle schools including:

- Creating a community for learning
- Teaching a core of common knowledge
- Ensuring success for all students
- Empowering teachers and administrators
- Preparing teachers for the middle grades
- Improving academic performance through better health and fitness
- Re-engaging families in the education of your adolescents
- Connecting schools with communities.

The SL Connection:
Provides a venue for connecting schools and communities, allows families to be involved in Service-Learning projects, touches the lives of families who do not have children in school, ensures success through accomplishing goals, builds upon basic skills and curriculum, creates teamwork within the classroom

Service-Learning and Caring Communities

As a statewide initiative of seven state agencies, Caring Communities is based on six core results:

- Parents working
- Children safe in their families and families safe in their communities
- Young children ready to enter school
- Children and families healthy
- Children and youth succeeding in school
- Youth ready to enter the workforce and become productive citizens.

The SL Connection:

Through Service-Learning communities become safer—students connect with community members and students begin to respect other people and their physical environment; Service-Learning students often tutor younger students or volunteer in day cares and primary care facilities; Service-Learning leads to academic achievement; Service-Learning prepares students for many fields of work as they become involved in real-life service projects; Service-Learning builds the character and qualities of good citizens.

Service-Learning and School to Career

As a national initiative, School to Career helps students attain high academic and occupational standards, encourages the development of a flexible system designed by local community partnerships to meet local needs, offers expanded exposure to a broad array of career opportunities, and offers relevant academic and meaningful work-based experience.

The SL Connection:

Service-Learning engages students in learning experiences that help develop organizational, team, and problem-solving skills; develops competencies and foundation skills identified as important for employability; fosters responsible citizenship; gains support of business leaders through community partnerships;

Service-Learning and School Age Care

As a nation-wide program, School Age Care (SAC) is a provides a safe, caring, and nurturing place for extended learning, fun, play, social, recreational, and life skills development for students during their out-of-school hours. SAC extends and enriches the opportunities for experiential learning and social development incorporating a strong partnership of school, family, and community members that collaboratively contribute to the growth of students as they mature into caring, competent, and responsible adults.

The SL Connection:

Service-Learning is a venue for extending and reinforcing academics, social skills, and life-skills. It requires community partnerships, and provides experiential learning opportunities.

Service-Learning and A+ Schools

As a state initiative, A+ Schools is aimed at raising academic standards, opening new doors to higher education and introducing students to the teaching profession through tutoring and mentoring activities. Its goals are to: Reduce dropout rate, Eliminate the general education track curriculum, Provide better "career pathways" for all students, and Work more closely with business and higher-education leaders. The key goal is to assure that all students, when they graduate, are well prepared to pursue advanced education, employment, or both.

The SL Connection:
Provides students with real-life work experiences in a variety of career fields, gives students tutoring and mentoring opportunities, allows students to make connections with business leaders in their communities, provides opportunities for service (as required by A+).

Service-Learning and CTSO's
Career and Technical Student Organizations such as FCCLA, TSA, DECA, FBLA, FFA, and Skills USA-VICA are housed within school districts across the state and involve students in grades K-16. The goals of these organizations include increasing personal skills such as dependability, teamwork, communications, and customer relations. They place an emphasis on family and community service that builds bridges between school, family and community as well as civic consciousness. They emphasize career development that contributes to career success and promote community development.

The SL Connection:
Service-Learning accomplishes many of the same goals as CTSO's. In fact, much of the community service and community development work of these organizations is Service-Learning because it is tied to academic curriculum. In addition the development of social skills are assessed within the students' demonstrated service projects. Each organization has a Community Based Partner such as the March of Dimes (FBLA) or Habitat for Humanity (TSA) with which students work.

Service-Learning and Character Education
Built on the core values of trustworthiness, responsibility, courage, respect, fairness, caring, and citizenship, character education programs seek to prepare young people to be productive and responsible members of society with a greater awareness of ethical issues and an increased academic performance.

The SL Connection:
Service-Learning serves as a way to teach the values we wish to build. Character traits are embedded in the learning content, not taught a s a separate curriculum. Character is built through real interaction and communication with others in the community (self worth, compassion, honest, caring.) Students learn that character development occurs over the life span of an individual; they see their own growth as service providers and the growth in service recipients. Service-Learning promotes creative thinking, problem solving, analysis and organization—the tools that promote character development.

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